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Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict

Letter dated 14 January 2008 from the President of the Security Council to the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations

On 19 July 2007, the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, established by Security Council resolution 1612 (2005), examined the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2007/391). Following its meeting of 18 September 2007, the Working Group adopted its conclusions on parties to the armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/AC.51/2007/17).

In follow-up to the recommendations of the Working Group, approved by the Security Council, I am entrusted, in my capacity as the President of the Council, to welcome the cooperation of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo with the Working Group and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, as well as the efforts of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to promote the rights of children in situations of armed conflict, in particular its ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and its Optional Protocols.

I also take note of the ongoing cooperation of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo with the International Criminal Court in its independent investigations aimed at ensuring accountability for the perpetrators of war crimes against children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I strongly urge the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo:

(a) To address the issue of impunity for perpetrators of violations and abuses committed against children, with the assistance of forces of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and to act upon the arrest warrants for Laurent Nkunda, to confirm the charges against former Mai-Mai commander Kynugu Mutanga, known as Gédéon, and to rearrest Jean-Pierre Biyoyo, former commander of the armed group Mudundu 40;

(b) To prosecute as a matter of priority other persons responsible for crimes committed against children;

(c) To identify, together with the World Bank and the main donors, financial mechanisms to complete the process of identification, verification and separation of

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children who are among the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC), non-integrated forces and dissident or non-eligible armed groups, with a view to reaching children in a way that is distinct from the adult-oriented national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme;

(d) To facilitate, together with FARDC, the work of child protection partners in separating children from the mixed brigades and taking the necessary measures against the commanders (and those at the lower level of command) who continue to obstruct the separation of children;

(e) To take specific care, in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, of girls exploited by armed forces and groups, as well as of children born of rape, including through recognition of their citizenship.

Finally, I invite the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to inform the Security Council of the follow-up given to the above requests.

(*Signed*) Giadalla A. **Ettalhi**
President of the Security Council